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Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND

(b) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/479)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (A/49/463)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/49/485)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (A/49/254, A/49/522)

1. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing item 89, referred to the progress achieved in fulfilling the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and highlighted the main developments which had taken place since the Committee's previous consideration of the item: in particular, the high level of participation and the achievements made in many spheres and the commitment of non-governmental organizations to support those efforts, demonstrated during the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at which objectives related to Agenda 21 had been considered; and the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. Among the achievements since UNCED were the negotiation of the international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, the work related to the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change, and the convening of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Those achievements and other ongoing negotiating processes demonstrated that the momentum achieved at UNCED had not been lost, although much still remained to be done in such spheres as the transfer of resources and technology, in which it had been hoped that an increase in official development assistance would be achieved, whereas in reality there had been a 10 per cent reduction. In his view, the first problem that arose was that the supplementary measures agreed upon at UNCED were being implemented on a sectoral basis, which was contrary to the spirit of Agenda 21 in which the integral nature of the measures adopted and the need to link environmental questions with development questions had been stressed. In that context he drew attention to the important role which had been and should continue to be played by non-governmental organizations, and to the need to coordinate measures adopted at the international level with national measures and to mobilize the necessary political will to ensure the implementation of Agenda 21.

2. Mr. CORELL (Legal Counsel), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine

resources of the world's oceans and seas (A/49/469), said that the report described additional measures taken by Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to "ensure that a global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing was fully implemented on the high seas of the world's oceans and seas, including enclosed seas and semi-enclosed seas, by 31 December 1992" in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/215. The information submitted was based on 17 replies received from Member States, all indicating that those States were complying with the moratorium, and also replies received from intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies which reported on the activities of their member States and associated organizations. Although in general terms the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions on the matter had been implemented, there was some evidence that large-scale drift-net fishing was still being carried out in areas such as the North-East Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

3. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the sustainable use and conservation of the living marine resources of the high seas: United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/49/522), he said that the report concentrated on the third and fourth sessions of the Conference, held at Headquarters in March and August 1994, respectively. At its third session, the Conference had considered a negotiating text prepared by the Chairman (A/CONF.164/13) which had later been revised and issued as document A/CONF.164/13/Rev.1. During its fourth session, the Conference had undertaken a section-by-section review of the revised negotiating text. On the basis of the discussions held regarding the form of the instrument that would result from the Conference, the proposals made during the review of the revised negotiating text and informal consultations, the Chairman had prepared a new revised version of the negotiating text (A/CONF.164/22). The new text was in the form of a treaty and consisted of a preamble, 13 parts and 3 annexes, and, among other things, covered mechanisms for international cooperation, responsibilities of flag States, compliance and enforcement, port State enforcement and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Although there had been no consensus on the question of the form of the instrument that would derive from the Conference, the Chairman had felt that there was a widespread view that a binding outcome of the Conference's deliberations would be essential if the Conference was to achieve the goal of effective conservation and management of the fish stocks concerned.

4. In view of the rapid decline of various fish stocks and the associated economic and social impact, the issue of fishery conservation and management was emerging as a major source of controversy and possible conflict; UNCED had therefore been correct in identifying the issue as one of the main areas in need of urgent international attention and action. In view of that situation, the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had recommended to the General Assembly that it should convene two further sessions of the Conference in 1995.

5. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, although more than two years had elapsed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, implementation of its decisions and

recommendations fell short of the expectations of the developing countries, even though some measures had been adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

6. The principles regarding common but differentiated responsibility and provision of new and additional resources to developing countries had yet to be put into practice, and the implementation of commitments regarding the transfer of environmentally sound technology to those countries left much to be desired. The developing countries continued to feel bound by the commitments they had undertaken in Rio de Janeiro and to believe in the relevance of the analysis and basic principles of Agenda 21, in keeping with the major political significance that the Group of 77 and China accorded to the full and effective implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Rio Conference. Accordingly, issues of the provision of new and additional resources, transfer of environmentally sound technology and patterns of consumption and production should be priority issues on the agenda of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, and the secretariat should continue its study of those questions.

7. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the entry into force of the framework Convention on Climate Change and the work of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the parties to be held in Berlin early in 1995. They reaffirmed their support for the mandate of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/212. The Group of 77 and China were concerned by the turn taken by the deliberations in Geneva in August 1994, at the Committee's tenth session, when some developed countries had clearly showed their will to take the Committee in a direction that exceeded its mandate. The desire to amend the Framework Convention, on the pretext that the situation had evolved and that earlier commitments did not meet the current objectives, threatened the fragile consensus on which the Convention was based, in particular the essential principle of the common but differentiated responsibility of the Parties. It was important to emphasize that the Framework Convention on Climate Change was the sole international agreement concerning the environment that provided for different rights and duties for the various Parties, depending on their degree of responsibility and the damage they had caused to the environment. Therefore, given the historical responsibility of the industrialized countries in that area, the joint implementation of the commitments assumed in Rio de Janeiro should be strictly limited to those parties listed in annex I to the Convention.

8. Mr. RUNGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, two years after the Rio Summit, important progress had been made in the area of sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development had begun to be a focal point for enhancing international cooperation and an instrument for rationalizing the intergovernmental decision-making process for the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels, in order to achieve sustainable development in all countries. The European Union welcomed the Commission's efforts to institute an effective follow-up mechanism for its decisions, and hoped that that would lead to greater

participation by the international community in the concrete implementation of Agenda 21. In order to achieve that, however, the Commission would have to improve its working methods, and encourage active dialogue and an integrated approach to problems. Furthermore, it would have to reach out to coordinate its efforts with other relevant organs of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

9. The European Union was convinced that close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the business community was of great importance to the entire spectrum of sustainable development. Thus, the Commission must retain the political attention of members and continue to be the political motor in the area of sustainable development planning, especially through broad ministerial participation in its high-level meeting and by encouraging countries to submit annual reports on progress made.

10. As far as the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were concerned, the European Union looked forward with interest to their respective Conferences of the Parties in the Bahamas and Berlin. The replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was a major achievement and provided a sound basis for financing activities under those Conventions. Members of the European Union had committed more than a quarter of the contributions to the core fund of GEF for the next three years, and developing countries had also made important financial contributions. The European Union further noted with great satisfaction that the processes leading to an international convention to combat desertification and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had been successfully completed within the allotted time.

11. With regard to the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the negotiation process was well under way. There was an urgent need for conservation and sustainable management of fish stocks in order to counter the threat to those stocks and to the fishing communities dependent on them. The European Union believed that the concepts of biological unity of the fish stocks concerned and the compatibility of conservation and management measures applicable in areas under national jurisdiction and in the adjacent high seas, as well as the promulgation of effective enforcement provisions, were crucial elements for effective protection of those fish stocks for the next generation. Adequate solutions to those questions were a prerequisite for the consensus sought by the Conference.

12. Mr. SKARPHÉDINSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they were encouraged by the progress made in the past two years in the area of multilateral cooperation for the implementation of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as evidenced, inter alia, by the holding of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May 1994. They welcomed the Commission's efforts to establish an effective follow-up mechanism for its decisions, and emphasized that it must attempt to retain political attention on major issues in the area of sustainable development, especially through ministerial participation at its high-level meetings. The implementation of the Rio commitments at the local,

national and regional level must be intensified; accordingly, capacity-building in the developing countries and in countries with economies in transition was of the utmost importance.

13. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development concluded in Cairo a few weeks earlier provided a solid political platform for progress in sustainable development at all levels. The international community must therefore immediately step up implementation of the Rio commitments, as complemented by the Cairo Conference, and address effectively the crucial relationship between population, development and environment.

14. One of the most important means of reducing the pressure on the environment was by introducing radical changes in prevailing patterns of consumption and production. At the beginning of the year, Norway had hosted a symposium on sustainable consumption as a follow-up to which a round table on sustainable production and consumption would be held in Oslo from 6 to 10 February 1995. With the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden would be hosting a symposium on instruments to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns.

15. The establishment of the Committee on Trade and Environment as a result of the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was an important step forward in the process of promoting sustainable development through a greater coordination of trade and environmental policies. Future work on trade and environment must be aimed at developing an agreed framework for the use of necessary legitimate, transparent and predictable measures for environmental objectives while preventing unilateral and arbitrary green protectionism. However, some types of trade must either be severely restricted or banned outright. That was why the Nordic countries had supported the ban on exports of hazardous wastes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to non-OECD countries as of 1 January 1998, supported a tightening of the prior informed consent procedure on trade in dangerous substances and were calling for efforts to ban exports of chemicals which were prohibited or severely restricted in the country of origin, as proposed by the Government of Denmark to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

16. Concerning the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was to commence within a few weeks, the Nordic countries felt that it was of paramount importance that the Conference should draw up an effective medium-term programme of work, that the parties should agree on means to enhance the safety of biotechnology and the rights of farmers and indigenous peoples and that the Convention's Scientific Committee should be given a clear mandate and should resume its work as soon as possible. The preparations for the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change to be held in Berlin in 1995 were well under way. However, the Nordic countries felt that the present commitments were insufficient and therefore proposed that negotiations with a view to elaborating additional commitments in a protocol to the Convention should be held at the first session of the Conference. They were encouraged by efforts

both at national and regional levels to implement the principles regarding forests. It was worth noting in that regard the so-called Helsinki process which was aimed at promoting the implementation and development of those principles in Europe. Mention should also be made in that regard to the opening for signature of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. The Nordic countries also welcomed the successful completion of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

17. The Nordic countries considered it imperative that the international community should take effective steps to increase the protection of the marine environment and the sustainable harvesting of its resources. It was now generally recognized that almost all fisheries in the world were fully exploited and that a third were depleted or heavily overexploited. Therefore, it was important to implement the provisions in that regard under Agenda 21 and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Nordic countries had been actively following the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

18. The degradation of the oceans by pollution was another serious problem that had not received sufficient attention. The intergovernmental Conference on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities to be convened in Washington D.C.in November 1995 offered the opportunity to address the problem. The Nordic countries hoped that all States, including developing countries and relevant international agencies, would participate in the preparatory process for the Conference particularly the final preparatory meeting in Reykjavik in March 1995 when negotiations with respect to a world programme of action in that area would commence. In that context, particular attention should be paid to the problem of pollution by so-called persistent organic pollutants which constituted the most serious threat to the marine living resources and hence to human health. The Nordic countries were preparing an initiative for a global assessment of those pollutants which they would be presenting at the final preparatory meeting for the Intergovernmental Conference.

19. Finally, the Nordic countries wished to stress that they attached considerable importance to the implementation of the decision adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme and reaffirmed by the Commission on Sustainable Development concerning the detrimental effects of military activities on the environment.

20. Mr. ESTRADA-OYUELA (Argentina), Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, said that while some progress had been made over the two previous years with respect to defining the measures to be taken, little progress had been made in establishing appropriate mechanisms and making available the necessary financial resources to enable developing countries to implement such measures.

21. Argentina was particularly interested in the sustainable use of the marine living resources of the high seas and the protection of the global climate since

errors made in those areas would have a direct impact on its natural resources and, consequently, its prospects of meeting its population's future requirements. The high fish catches taken by third country fleets in the south-west Atlantic to the detriment of Argentine interests endangered the conservation of the entire region's fisheries. In a world where large numbers of people lacked basic food, the unregulated exploitation of the seas that resulted in waste and in a complete disregard for the needs for future generations was unacceptable. Therefore, the international community must soon find a solution to that problem based not on unilateral measures but on the joint elaboration of a binding international instrument that would establish an effective regime for the conservation of the living resources of the high seas that took due account of the interests of coastal States. He was sure that agreement could be reached on such an instrument at the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

22. Concerning the possible consequences that climate change might have should current trends in greenhouse gas emissions continue, all the indications were that the outputs of Argentina and other major temperate food-producing countries would be adversely affected. It was imperative to ensure that man did not interfere with the climate if the existing ecology was to be preserved. It was encouraging to note that 15 reports had been received from developed countries on their greenhouse gas emissions and the measures adopted to implement the Convention, the latter had been ratified by 95 States and one regional economic integration organization and had come into force on 21 March 1994. Those reports, which were required under the agreements signed at Rio in 1992, were under consideration.

23. The Secretary-General's report (A/49/485) provided an objective description of the current situation with regard to the essential question arising from the Convention itself, namely, whether the commitments which had been made were sufficient to achieve the objective of the Convention. Limitation by the developed countries of greenhouse gas emissions would not be enough to stabilize the concentration of those gases in the atmosphere, as proposed in the Convention. Accordingly, additional measures would have to be taken. The most appropriate approach was still not clear, which meant that a decision would have to be taken at the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Berlin in March 1995, with advisory support from the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

24. Policy decisions on climate had thus far been based on the scientific information and assessments provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set up by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It had been expected that the Intergovernmental Panel would present its findings on the matter in time for the Conference to adopt a decision. However, the Panel had postponed the corresponding seminar, and its conclusions would not appear in the report that would be submitted to the Conference. The absence of a scientific assessment might delay action that the scientists themselves considered necessary and urgent. As a solution, one group of countries had proposed an additional protocol under which the developed countries would agree to a substantial

reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Other Governments did not consider such general measures to be viable. According to some, the most influential developing countries should increase their participation in future efforts. There was only one quantitative commitment set out in the Convention: by the end of the century, developing countries had to bring their emissions back to 1990 levels. From that fact, some had drawn the conclusion that once that level had been achieved, emissions could start increasing again in the year 2001. That view detracted from the Convention's credibility, made it more difficult to negotiate other commitments and was conceptually incompatible with the idea that developing countries should be involved in future commitments.

25. Progress had been made in elaborating the Convention's financial mechanism and in establishing the Global Environment Facility as the interim operating entity of the mechanism, even though the total volume of resources envisaged was far from meeting initial expectations. The Conference of the Parties would also have to approve the new structure of the Facility, and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee had already submitted some compromise proposals for consideration dealing with certain controversial issues, such as the financing of preparatory work aimed at ensuring an adequate rate of progress in the area of climate change. According to the Instrument establishing the Global Environment Facility, global benefit should be the criterion for project selection, yet that criterion did not appear in the Framework Convention or in other conventions, nor had it been defined satisfactorily in the context of the Facility. In any event, it was essential to ensure that the Conference of the Parties was the body responsible for determining policy and establishing project-selection criteria and the programme priorities and to make it clear that control of financial resources did not imply control of policy-making.

26. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was also preparing its recommendation on the structure of the Convention secretariat, which should have the necessary resources to present the Conference of the Parties with independent evaluations of complex and important reports dealing with such sensitive issues as energy, transportation and industry; those reports were not abstract texts on scientific theories but assessments of measures that would have national and world impact.

27. Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia), after endorsing the views expressed by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77, said it bore repeating that the transition to sustainable development in the South was contingent upon the provision of additional financial resources by the North; the only new funds that had been provided was the 2-billion dollar contribution to the Global Environment Facility, which was a mere fraction of the volume estimated at the Rio Conference. Official development assistance levels had steadily dropped and the commitment to allocating 0.7 per cent of the gross national product seemed all but forgotten.

28. Cooperation in the area of technology transfer, another commitment made at the Rio Conference, was not advancing at an acceptable pace. While it was claimed that all countries had the right to share natural resources, the North, as custodian of the world's financial and technological resources, would not

allow that same principle to be applied to man-made resources. Malaysia resisted the attempt to impose the burden of change on the developing countries while developed countries sought to downplay their commitments and responsibilities under various conventions, such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

29. The Commission on Sustainable Development should play a leading role in the area of consumption patterns. Sustainability of resource use should not be at the expense of the development and human needs of the South but should be based on modifying the unsustainable consumption patterns prevalent in the North. The natural resources of the South were also threatened by advances in biotechnology. The advanced countries, which had for years duplicated the technologies of others, were currently claiming that the South should pass intellectual property laws to protect the interests of the major companies of the North which owned the major share of the world's patents. That meant that countries that did not wish to depend forever on Northern technology would have to pay out billions of dollars in patent rights.

30. Despite the fact that a considerable number of ministers of environment had been present at its most recent session, the Commission on Sustainable Development lacked a sufficiently high political profile. The Commission must become a forum in which ministers of environment and ministers of development could deal with a broad range of issues. Environment and development issues were linked to all fields of human endeavour; they also influenced policy and were affected by policy changes. It was thus vitally important that the Commission should remain one step ahead of all that took place in the field within and outside the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and a renegotiation of the principles agreed under Agenda 21. The Commission should also focus attention on the issue of trade and environment. The efforts being made in other forums, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to link trade and development might undermine development efforts, especially if they resulted in unilateral trade measures.

31. He wished to make two proposals which his delegation believed required urgent attention if progress was to be made in the implementation of Agenda 21. The first was to strengthen substantially the capacity of international financial institutions and other international organizations to implement Agenda 21 in a more effective and visible manner. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank must introduce operational reforms to reflect the objectives of Agenda 21 so that they could better serve the needs of the developing countries, especially the poor countries. The second proposal was to encourage the search for an appropriate combination of policies and funding sources for the various sectoral clusters. The Commission must draw up in some detail a model of the mix of instruments and financing schemes best suited to each cluster.

32. The contributions of the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, established to enrich the Commission's deliberations, had been limited thus far. Board members in their capacity as experts, should

participate more directly in the Commission's sessions. In addition, the Board should arrange briefing sessions open to all interested parties to present the results of its discussions. The Commission on Sustainable Development should not be seen as the mere guardian of Agenda 21 and other decisions taken at the Rio Conference, but should serve as a guiding force by initiating improvements in international relations as a whole and translating the promises of the Rio Conference into concrete action.

33. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) said that his country recognized the efforts made thus far by Governments, international organizations and the private sector to implement the commitments undertaken at the Rio Conference. It welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was responsible for the internal coordination of the implementation of Agenda 21. The inter-sessional work of a number of Governments, the United Nations system and other international and intergovernmental bodies provided input to the Commission which, in turn, provided feedback on the practical implementation of Agenda 21. In that context, his delegation was pleased to announce that a meeting of experts on the dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies would be held at Seoul from 30 November to 2 December.

34. His delegation was encouraged by the entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the measures taken by developed countries which were parties to the Convention to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. It was regrettable, however, that, even after the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, there was still disagreement over some crucial issues covered by the Convention, such as financial assistance, technology transfer and the criteria and methods of joint implementation.

35. His delegation took note of the progress achieved by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. None the less, it believed that the Chairman's revised draft should reflect greater balance between the positions of coastal and fishing States. In addition, the sections dealing with new participants, compliance and enforcement, port State enforcement, the abuse of rights and enclaves should be further improved. Concerning the form of the final document, his delegation continued to maintain that the Conference should discharge its mandate not by formulating a binding instrument but rather by simply formulating recommendations.

36. Mr. DOUJAK (Austria) expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union and said that, with the adoption of Agenda 21, the Rio Conference had represented a milestone in the debate on the conditions for sustainable development and its initial implementation. None the less, more than ever, the objectives established called for an unconditional commitment by all parties and, frequently, for a fundamental change in individual behaviour and in the behaviour of enterprises at both the local and state level. Austria sincerely appreciated the dedication shown by Dr. Toepfer, the Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in ensuring the success of its work. The publication of CSD-Update was useful in increasing the transparency of inter-sessional activities organized at the

national level by the countries concerned and helped to build awareness of the issue among delegations.

37. In April 1994, Austria had organized a symposium on sustainable development and international law, in the belief that legal issues could have a decisive impact on sustainable development at the international level. In that connection, the outcome of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was encouraging. His delegation also intended to pursue its efforts and to promote initiatives designed to establish the necessary legal framework and mechanisms for ensuring respect for the commitments undertaken.

38. Austria hoped that the commitments assumed under the Framework Convention on Climate Change would be strengthened. All the necessary elements already existed for the elaboration of a mandate under which those commitments could be strengthened. Moreover, carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced by the year 2000 if the objectives of the Convention were to be fulfilled. Austria, for its part, had already made a commitment at the national level to reduce emissions in accordance with the Toronto objectives and appealed to other countries to consider adopting such measures as well.

39. Mr. GALLEGOS (United States of America) said that his country continued to attach paramount importance to the world-wide objective of environmentally sound and sustainable development and to the role of the United Nations in that area. It hoped that the implementation of the measures about to be proposed by the Secretary-General in his final report on the Agenda for Development would integrate all the results of current United Nations activities and recent and future conferences relating to the implementation of Agenda 21.

40. His delegation shared the view that the Commission on Sustainable Development of the Economic and Social Council would continue to be the primary source of review, encouragement and support at the international level for the implementation of Agenda 21. It reaffirmed its strong, continuing support for the work of the Commission. During the consultations held in New York with the Chairman of the Commission, his delegation had formulated some suggestions on how to improve the functioning of the Commission. It had indicated, inter alia, that: it was necessary to increase and improve the information submitted by countries to the Commission on aspects of Agenda 21 for consideration at each session; the preparation and use of national sustainable development strategies must be encouraged and facilitated; coordination of the support provided by the United Nations system for the implementation of Agenda 21 must be more effective; the freedom and flexibility which had thus far characterized the inter-sessional work of Governments or appropriate international organizations must be maintained, since any restriction imposed on those activities would undermine the effectiveness of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The United States would focus its inter-sessional efforts on solving the problem of threats to coral reefs and reducing human and environmental exposure to toxic substances.

41. Significant international environmental agreements, such as those relating to climate change, biological diversity, hazardous waste and protection of the

ozone layer, had been elaborated under the auspices of the United Nations and were being implemented with the Organization's support. The Convention to Combat Desertification and the work being done on the elaboration of a possibly binding agreement within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should be added to that list of major achievements. In that connection, his delegation was concerned about reports of violations of the drift-net moratorium in the Mediterranean and in the Bay of Biscay and supported the efforts of the flag States to resolve the problem.

42. His delegation also firmly supported the Programme of Action of the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and trusted that the report of the Secretary-General on its implementation would include consideration of United Nations system-wide coordination and inputs from relevant geographic regions and regional organizations. He stressed, however, that United Nations support for the follow-up process must be provided from within existing resources through the reorganization or reprogramming of available capacity.

43. In the spirit of the Rio Conference, the Summit of the Americas would be held in December at Miami and one of its major themes would be "Making democracy endure - sustainable development". Under that rubric, a call would be made for improving the well-being of the hemisphere's people and preserving the environment so that resources would be available to sustain future generations. He hoped that the Summit leaders would agree to increase technical cooperation and investment in energy efficiency and non-conventional renewable energy, leading to increased financing from multilateral development banks for sustainable energy projects and to the strengthening of environmental laws, standards and enforcement arrangements, with technical assistance from the appropriate regional institutions.

44. In conclusion, he recognized that the response to the Rio Commitments, though slow, was moving forward. Further impetus should be given to the efforts needed to continue the integration of environmental concerns into all aspects of economically viable and socially equitable development.

45. Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan) said that his Government had been working diligently to implement the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and, in that context, it had ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

46. In order to acknowledge the efforts of those countries that were striving to achieve sustainable development while incurring high costs in doing so and to make up for short-term pains which would lead to long-term gains, Jordan proposed the creation of an incentive plan to encourage and assist those countries with outstanding records in the achievement of sustainable development, on the basis of objective evaluation criteria. Such criteria could include human rights indicators, the human development criteria of UNDP, the

structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and IMF, and the implementation of environmental programmes.

47. Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) acknowledged that considerable progress had been made in implementing the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Commission on Sustainable Development and its working groups were engaged in fruitful work which served as the basis for action by the international community in that field. Concrete progress had been made towards resolving the sectoral problems dealt with in Agenda 21, such as hazardous waste disposal, the preservation of biological diversity and climate protection. The instruments which regulated international cooperation in the field of environmental protection were either being elaborated or had already entered into force. The Commission had begun the task of establishing new consumption patterns and ensuring the sustainable development of society. Although not without difficulty, progress had also been made on multisectoral issues such as financing for sustainable development and expanding the exchange of environmentally sound technologies. In that regard, the high-level meetings of international experts were of great importance, since they helped to bring the positions of the various countries closer together.

48. He welcomed the actions taken by certain countries to promote training in the field of the environment and to disseminate information on that subject. He also welcomed the more active participation of various sectors of society, including youth and children, in activities aimed at achieving sustainable development. The Russian Federation supported in particular the GLOBE initiative of the United States, which was a global study on environmental protection, and was prepared to work closely with other delegations interested in preparing a draft resolution on that subject during the current session of the General Assembly. On several occasions during the meetings of various bodies, the delegation of the Russian Federation had expressed its views on the need for strengthening cooperation within the United Nations system, including cooperation between the Commission on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. It would be useful if, in addition to the periodic contacts between those bodies, the Board and the Second Committee could organize ad hoc or informational meetings during their sessions to review the progress of work and to examine the prospects for cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

49. More emphasis should be placed on cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Commission on Sustainable Development in national and international plans, in light of the increasing interest of the World Bank in the environment and sustainable development. The possibility could be examined of taking joint action to promote greater understanding and to elaborate a national and international environmental policy as well as concrete analytical and statistical data. It was very important to use all the potential of the restructured GEF, which was why it should be made fully operational as early as possible.

50. Closer working links should be established between the Commission on Sustainable Development and regional organizations, especially the regional economic commissions of the United Nations, in order to coordinate the Organization's recommendations with concrete regional programmes and projects. In that connection, it would be important to strengthen the interaction between the Commission and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), headquartered at Vienna. A very important task, which he hoped could be completed by 1997, was that of elaborating sustainable development indicators which could serve as guidelines for international cooperation and for the efforts of countries in that field.

51. He wished to stress the importance of continuing to elaborate international instruments for the protection of the environment and their application to the national policies of the various countries. The Parliament of the Russian Federation had already ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change and his Government stood ready to take an active part in the work on the protocols additional to the Convention. He welcomed the recent signing at Paris of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which was a major milestone in international affairs and in the implementation of the Rio programmes. The delegation of the Russian Federation supported the decision to hold two additional sessions of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in 1995 and wished to stress how important it was for the decisions of that Conference to be binding.

52. In the view of the Russian Federation, one of the most important instruments for the implementation of the Rio decisions was effective participation in regional and subregional associations. Such cooperation was aimed at preserving the marine environment and living resources, disposing of toxic wastes, developing coastal infrastructure and taking joint action to promote sustainable development in border areas.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Thursday, 20 October 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KHAN	(Pakistan)
later:	Mr. RAICHEV (Vice-Chairman)	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. KHAN (Chairman)	(Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/49/SR.14
27 October 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-81734 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/479)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/463)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/49/485)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued) (A/49/254, A/49/522)

1. Mr. FRASER (Canada) said that, while much remained to be done to reach the goals set at Rio, the world community could point with some pride to the progress achieved in the two years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. For Canada, one of the most significant of the issues yet to be resolved was the fishery crisis in the North West Atlantic. Steps had been taken to reduce catches of endangered stocks in that region. The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had made significant progress in developing an effective regime for high seas fisheries containing effective conservation and management measures and buttressed by appropriate surveillance and control and a binding mechanism for settlement of disputes.

2. The number of environmental issues on which the international community had made a clear commitment to action was growing, as demonstrated by the entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the signing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Canada also welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Global Environment Facility and the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Programme of Action adopted at that Conference represented a step forward in efforts to meet the needs of a group of countries that faced difficult environmental and development challenges.

3. The 1994 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had offered the first opportunity to review the implementation of Agenda 21. It had highlighted the Commission's value and the steps that could be taken to make it even more effective, for example, promoting true exchanges of views among Ministers at the high-level meeting and encouraging the participation of Ministers of development and planning as well as those representing the sectors under discussion.

4. Canada had submitted its national report outlining the progress it had made in meeting the goals of Agenda 21. National reports represented storehouses of information and experience from which all could benefit, and greater opportunities should be created for their discussion. Internationally accepted indicators of sustainable development were essential to gauging progress and creating a benchmark for discussing future options. Inter-sessional meetings of the Commission involving international institutions, non-governmental and other organizations had been very useful in advancing the dialogue and preparing for the annual sessions. Meetings such as the one Canada had just hosted on forests and another planned for 1995 on toxic substances, were a valuable tool. A commitment to action at the national and community levels, as well as at the global level, was required in order to turn Agenda 21 into a reality. Much of Canada's progress had come because it had set goals, standards and measures providing a clear target to be achieved, and the world community deserved no less.

5. Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand) said that his delegation was generally encouraged by the progress achieved in implementing the results of the Rio Conference. The continuing interest of the international community in that area was evident from the attention paid to the annual session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In the view of his delegation, the Commission's two main functions were to provide an overview of information supplied by Governments, institutions, and non-governmental organizations on the implementation of Agenda 21, and to facilitate international agreement on policies, programmes and priorities for sustainable development. Further consideration should be given to improving its review functions, and national reporting requirements must be streamlined so that all countries, however small, could participate in the process. The Commission's clearinghouse function was essential because of the collective and interactive nature of environment and development problems, which involved a wide range of actors and could not be divided into discrete sub-issues. The Commission had a key role to play in drawing together the strands of special negotiations or subsidiary bodies addressing particular environmental issues.

6. The effects of climate change, sea-level rise and climate variability were of critical concern to the countries of the South Pacific. The entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change was an important first step towards addressing that problem effectively. Nevertheless, New Zealand recognized that the issue was complex and that solving it would be a long-term exercise. It supported practical, flexible and equitable measures to enable the international community collectively to achieve the Convention's objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at a level which would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate. A meaningful dialogue with transnational corporations whose activities and products had significant implications for the climate must be developed.

7. New Zealand was pleased with the substantial progress made by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The decision to work towards a legally binding agreement was welcome. The Conference was important to all States of the South Pacific region, as well as

to other developing States in whose economies fisheries played an important part. All such States must be enabled to participate in its work. New Zealand had contributed more than NZ 200,000 to Member States for that purpose.

8. Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing had ceased on the high seas of the South Pacific as a result of the strong and united action by South Pacific countries and the cooperation of distant water fishing countries in the region. New Zealand appreciated the significant measures taken by Japan and the Republic of Korea, in particular. Regrettably, however, there had been reports of drift-net fishing in the Mediterranean, the Bay of Biscay and the North East Atlantic. International pressure must, therefore, be maintained and the Secretary-General must continue to report annually to the General Assembly on the implementation of resolution 46/215.

9. Mr. LONDOÑO (Colombia) said that the implementation of Agenda 21 had been impeded by a number of obstacles and uncertainties associated in particular with the failure of the industrialized countries to meet their commitments. Despite important sectoral advances, such as the signing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility and the activation of the Commission on Sustainable Development the picture was marred by the restrictions imposed by the developed countries on the requisite flows of finance and technology and the insufficient funds made available to the Global Environment Facility. The gap in technological development was widening. The tendency to allow market forces to determine technology transfer was at odds with the principles of solidarity and cooperation agreed in Rio de Janeiro.

10. The global decline in official development assistance (ODA) also cast doubts on the political will of the industrialized countries to fulfil their promises. There had been a systematic attempt to divert attention to the domestic policies of developing countries and the mobilization of their scarce resources for the achievement of the goals of sustainable development. Domestic reform was not sufficient. Access to the markets of the industrialized countries was essential to generate the resources that developing countries needed to address the problems of environmental degradation. The attempts to raise new barriers, such as those ostensibly designed to promote environmental goals but actually motivated by protectionist aims, were therefore deplorable.

11. Colombia advocated stronger links between the themes of population and sustainable development. The Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development formed an important complement to Agenda 21.

12. Mr. ALBIN (Mexico) said that the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development had set in motion a process of promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the agreements and commitments entered into at the Rio Conference, especially those embodied in Agenda 21. The Commission's role should be consolidated and its action based on the criteria of transparency, functionality and substance. Specific recommendations should be made on sectoral and intersectoral aspects of Agenda 21.

13. The Government of Mexico viewed as a positive step the decision to link the solution of problems relating to technology transfer and the provision of financial resources to specific sectoral themes. It also welcomed the launching of the second phase of the Global Environment Facility and expressed the hope that the question of whether or not it should continue as the funding mechanism of those conventions would soon be settled.

14. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had come up with the innovative concept of an "association for sustainable development" among those States, which would depend for its success on the support of the international community. Mexico was prepared to join in the effort to implement the Barbados Programme of Action.

15. The recently signed United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was of enormous significance, for drought and desertification affected the daily lives and even the prospects for survival of millions of people. While recognizing the need to give priority to Africa's problems, the Government of Mexico stressed that the Convention was universal in scope and should also mobilize international cooperation on behalf of the other continents.

16. At recent consultations in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the preparation of a code of conduct for responsible fishing, Mexico had listened with concern to arguments that negotiations in the context of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should take precedence over all other negotiation exercises. The Government of Mexico was convinced that the processes under way for preparing the code and an instrument on high seas fisheries were complementary.

17. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

18. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that protection of the environment was considered a national priority in Tunisia. Achieving sustainable development was one of the major challenges facing Tunisia, and the Government would work together with all components of society and non-governmental organizations to deal with the challenge.

19. The Tunisian approach was to elaborate a sustainable development strategy that would ensure ecological balance, self-sufficiency in food, sound management of natural resources, especially water, and desertification control. His country welcomed the signing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification but warned that the scale of the technological and financial resources required for its implementation called for an effective and dynamic world partnership.

20. Tunisia would shortly be hosting a conference on sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. The purpose of the conference was to promote the regeneration of the ecosystems of the Mediterranean, which were under severe threat from a variety of sources. It was hoped to adapt the Mediterranean Action Plan to take account of the new sustainable development approach.

21. In view of the increasing interdependence of nations in the quest for sustainable development, President Ben Ali of Tunisia had recently made a number of practical suggestions aimed at promoting North-South solidarity, in particular an appeal for the recycling of debt in the form of environmental and development projects.

22. Mr. GAZMURI (Chile) said that despite the tremendous progress made in terms of the entry into force of the two Conventions signed at Rio and the signing of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, implementation of environmental instruments in developing countries was impeded by the insufficient transfer of financial resources and technology. The industrialized countries' failure to provide new and additional resources for the implementation of Agenda 21 was seriously compromising the results of the Earth Summit. The restructuring of the Global Environment Facility was a step in the right direction but it was insufficient.

23. Referring to the transfer of environmentally sound technology, he said that the industrialized countries and development agencies must replace conditionality by more demand-driven technological cooperation. Otherwise, the assistance they provided would become just another commercial transaction. In view of the inadequate transfer of technology, the North-South and South-South exchange of experiences were particularly valuable.

24. The private sector and non-governmental organizations must join in the efforts to achieve sustainable development. Indeed, they had made an important contribution to the Rio Conference and to the International Conference on Population and Development and had a valuable role to play in building public awareness.

25. At the institutional level, the Commission on Sustainable Development would be effective only if it functioned as a democratic body on a consensus basis. The implementation of Agenda 21 was the responsibility of the Commission and the subsidiary bodies it established. In that context, his delegation welcomed the work of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Finance and the establishment of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues. In order to ensure the achievement of concrete results, the high-level political dialogue should be strengthened at the next session of the Commission.

26. In the past year, Chile had taken a number of measures to protect the environment. In March, the Basic Environmental Act entered into force, replacing the sectoral approach of previous environmental legislation by an integral approach. The new Act embodied important principles of the Earth Summit concerning preventive action and environmental impact assessment. It established environmental institutions, starting with a decentralized public service which was represented in all parts of the country. The role of education and citizen participation was stressed in both the new legislation and government policy on the environment. Chile had also ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Parliament was in the process of ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

27. Mr. KARIM (Bangladesh) expressed support for the statement delivered by the Group of 77. It was disappointing that follow-up of the Earth Summit at the national, regional and international level had consisted of debate rather than concrete action. While national Governments were primarily responsible for implementing Agenda 21 and other environmental instruments the developing countries lacked the financial resources and technology to do so without continued and enhanced international cooperation. In that connection, special attention should be given to the needs and environmental concerns of the least developed countries. The resources of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) fell far short of the $125 billion in additional aid which the developing countries would require annually, and new and additional resources for their sustainable development had not been forthcoming. Given the decline in official development assistance and the deepening debt crisis it was more necessary than ever to seek new and innovative sources of financing for environment and development activities.

28. It was therefore vital for the developing countries to increase their export earnings and to benefit from trade liberalization, as provided for in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Compensatory measures must be taken for those countries, particularly the least developed countries which might be negatively affected in the short term by the provisions of the Uruguay Round agreements. They should continue to receive preferential treatment; they also needed assistance in diversifying their exports. Savings realized by the correction of unsustainable production and consumption patterns in the developed countries should be used to combat extreme poverty in the poorest countries. Priority should be accorded to the transfer of environmentally sound technology and know-how to the developing countries on concessional and preferential terms, with emphasis on national capacity-building measures. Results in that area - which had thus far been insignificant - should be monitored by the inter-sessional working groups.

29. It seemed that not much progress had been achieved in operationalizing the goals and objectives of the Rio Summit. However, the high-level meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development had helped to keep environmental issues alive. His delegation hoped that the Commission's decisions would be implemented urgently.

30. Bangladesh accorded high priority to environmental protection, on which its very survival depended. It had formulated a national environmental policy and established a national committee on environment under the Prime Minister in order to implement Agenda 21. Issues of climate change, global warming and desertification were of particular concern to his country. Although Bangladesh contributed very little to greenhouse gas emissions, it would be exposed to great danger if the sea level rose. It looked forward to serving as a member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, beginning in 1995.

31. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) noted that in the two years since the holding of the Earth Summit, there had been no change in the factors which impeded the sustainable development of the developing countries. Nor had the commitments made by the developed countries concerning financing and technology transfer

been fulfilled. The question of environment and trade had become a burning issue, particularly with the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The establishment of environmental standards in trade, however, should not be used as a pretext for introducing protectionist practices or imposing new trade barriers. The needs of the developing countries must be fully taken into account in the establishment of environmental standards in trade.

32. Her delegation had participated actively in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which it attached great importance. Practical measures should be taken with a view to fulfilling the goals of the first phase of the Convention. The developing countries should not be made to accept specific restrictive targets through amendments to the Convention or negotiations on new protocols. Such action would prejudice the legal basis of the Convention, expressed in the formula "common but differentiated responsibilities". It would also reopen complicated negotiation processes, thereby hampering the implementation of the Convention. The introduction of amendments or the drafting of protocols to compensate for inadequacies in the Convention should not be undertaken until practical experience and scientific evidence had been acquired during an initial implementation phase.

33. As a responsible fishing State, China had actively participated in the work on a code of conduct for responsible fishing and in the various meetings and consultations of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Her delegation believed that the work and results of the Conference should be consistent with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as requested in General Assembly resolution 47/192. It wished to point out that as yet no decision had been taken on the format of the draft agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks (A/49/522, Appendix). The draft agreement stressed that developing countries required special assistance in order to participate in the conservation, management and utilization of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. Her delegation also believed that coordinated and integrated conservation and management measures should be adopted throughout an area where the same species of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks were found.

34. Greater flexibility should be given to regional organizations with regard to enforcement on the high seas. The principle of exclusive jurisdiction of flag States should be upheld in the enforcement provisions concerning fishing boats on the high seas. In particular, the boarding, inspection, arrest and detention of fishing boats from another State by enforcement personnel from non-flag States was outside the scope of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. More appropriate enforcement measures were necessary in that regard. Preventive provisions should be formulated with a view to avoiding abuse of rights in enforcement on the high seas.

35. Referring to article 14 of the draft agreement, she said that measures concerning any specific area of the high seas should be consistent with the principles concerning the high seas in general. Her delegation firmly opposed unilateral action on the high seas on the pretext of conserving and managing the straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

36. Mr. TANASESCU (Romania) said that the experience gained in the two years following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had underscored the need for good vertical coordination between the Secretariat and the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and between the Secretariat and national bodies responsible for implementing Agenda 21. There was also a need for horizontal coordination. Both types of coordination could also be applied at the government level.

37. The recently established Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development had helped to ensure the coordination of the follow-up activities to the Earth Summit. The organization, conduct and outcome of a number of international conferences and meetings dealing with environmental issues had confirmed that the success of such activities depended largely on the participation of Governments.

38. Over the past two years, Governments had taken steps to implement the commitments they had assumed at the Rio Conference. The entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity and the adoption of measures to create the legal and institutional framework for sustainable development at the national level showed how much had been accomplished since 1992. However, owing to economic, social or political difficulties, many Member States had not yet been able to implement the decisions of the Conference. Progress in one country could not compensate for the lack of progress in another. Effective implementation at the global level required balanced results at the national level.

39. The first two sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been marked by efforts to find an identity suitable to that structure. There was a need for intense intersessional activity at the expert level, which could serve as a basis for the Commission's decisions. The changing world situation and the accumulation of new experience called for a permanent dialogue that would ensure the adoption of the best possible decisions. Such efforts should involve not only Governments but also intergovernmental organizations involved in intersectoral cooperation, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Governments should provide, on a regular basis, information that would contribute to a better understanding of sustainable development.

40. The Secretary-General's report on an agenda for development (A/48/935) and the discussion held on that subject had stressed a new interpretation of sustainable development which, from the theoretical point of view, went beyond the concept that had been formulated at the Rio Conference. Sustainable development was viewed not only as the result of the interaction of economic growth and the quality of the environment. Sustainable development must, first

of all, ensure sustainable human development, which required peace, economic growth, environment, social justice and democracy.

41. The Global Environment Facility, which was the mechanism for implementing the activities of Agenda 21 at the global level, had recently begun its long-term operational phase. Romania, which was already participating in three regional projects financed by the Facility, considered that the implementation of regional programmes was based on the existence of transboundary ecosystems whose protection required concerted action on the part of a number of States. Joint activities made it possible to gain a better understanding of the effects of such activities on the environment, the dimension of the problems, and the requirements of future cooperation. The efficient use of resources was more important than the amount of resources available.

42. Cooperation among the three institutions participating in the Global Environment Facility - UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank - could be improved. The scientific expertise offered by UNEP was needed to ensure long-term programme efficiency and a balanced distribution of resources among the various regional or national programmes. The Facility's financing of the incremental costs of projects already begun by the recipient countries should not place any constraints on the allocation of resources. His delegation proposed that the Commission on Sustainable Development should conduct a triennial review of the Facility's activities.

43. Mr. Khan (Chairman) resumed the Chair.

44. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama), speaking on behalf of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, said that, over the past few years, the Central American Governments had joined efforts to establish a number of regional environmental coordination mechanisms. The most recent Central American effort in the field of environment and development had been the Central American Environmental Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Managua, Nicaragua, on 12 and 13 October 1994. The Summit had concluded with the signing of the Alliance for Sustainable Development. Costa Rica, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama had agreed that the concept of sustainable development would increasingly serve as the basis for plans and programmes of action to strengthen and improve natural resources management. To that end, Central America was making its best effort to implement the guidelines established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

45. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been a major step in the adoption of international institutional arrangements in pursuance of the Earth Summit. However, not one Central American State was as yet a member of the Commission.

46. The Central American Governments had agreed that environmental policies should solve problems of national importance while taking account of their regional and international implications. In order to encourage action at the local level, the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development provided that, for the most part, the vital functions of sustainable development would be

carried out by existing bodies and offices at both the municipal and national levels. Only the coordination of regional efforts would require the creation of special centres and offices. For the financing of its programmes and projects, the Alliance had agreed to establish the Central American Environment Fund, which would be managed by an independent trust. Central America wished to cooperate closely with the international community and required its assistance in order to give priority to environmentally sound development.

47. The Central American countries had participated in the recent restructuring of the Global Environment Facility. They considered that an increase in financial commitments to the Facility was essential.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Thursday, 20 October 1994
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued)

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A/C.2/49/SR.15
7 November 1994
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ORIGINAL: SPANISH

94-81740 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/479)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/463)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/49/485)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued) (A/49/254, A/49/522)

1. Mr. PONIKIEWSKI (Poland) said that many delegations feared that the spirit of the Rio Conference was fading away. It was therefore of paramount importance for the Commission on Sustainable Development - the most important institution for the successful follow-up of the Conference - to maintain the highest possible profile, and to maintain a high-level political component in its work and broaden participation in it. His delegation fully supported the proposal by the Chairman of the Commission that other ministers and, in particular, ministers of finance should also participate in the work of the Commission. It also agreed with the comment made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union that the Commission on Sustainable Development must maintain an active dialogue and an integrated approach to the basic issues of sustainable development.

2. National sustainable development strategies and action plans and national reports presented to the Commission continued to be valuable instruments for monitoring the implementation of the Rio commitments. They should also serve to improve the exchange of information on the experience acquired by various countries, and on the policies and instruments employed and their results. That was particularly important because many countries lacked experience in that regard. Poland was particularly interested in information concerning eco-labelling, green auditing, energy auditing, recycling and taxation.

3. Related to that was another politically sensitive issue: the elaboration of sustainable development indicators. Many argued that the implementation of the Rio commitments could be easily measured in terms of financial flows. In that connection, he wished to point out that the resources contributed were not nearly sufficient to cover the estimated costs. However, the conclusion of the negotiations on the new instrument for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which would become a universal facility, was a positive step.

4. The transfer of technology, which was more complex, was not as easy to measure. A more focused approach to the question was therefore required. To

that end, the dissemination of information must be greatly improved. His delegation hoped that the United Nations system would be able to formulate more specific proposals which would draw a response from countries in a position to transfer environmentally sound technologies. His delegation was prepared to cooperate in that endeavour.

5. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the fact that, in 1994, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had been adopted and the drafting of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa had been finalized. That constituted a major stride in the implementation of the Rio commitments.

6. Mr. BURHAN (Turkey) commended the Commission on Sustainable Development for the work it had done to implement the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and for its efforts to establish an effective follow-up mechanism for its own decisions. Obviously, national, regional and international efforts must be pooled in order to achieve the UNCED objectives. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the new instrument for the restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which had a major role to play in achieving those objectives. His delegation would continue to provide financial support of about 4 million special drawing rights to the Global Environment Facility in its new phase.

7. Regional activities in connection with the implementation of Agenda 21 were extremely important. In that context, he pointed out that the contracting parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution had decided to prepare an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean region. Furthermore, Turkey was preparing another Agenda 21 with the cooperation of the central Asian republics and the Balkan countries, in which context it had hosted the first meeting of Ministers of Environment of the central Asian republics and Balkan countries, held on 4 and 5 July 1994. At the close of the meeting, an appeal had been issued to the Heads of State and Government of the international community, requesting their help in solving the region's environmental problems, and the Ministers present had adopted a declaration reaffirming their determination to solve those problems. His delegation urged all international financial and other organizations, in particular the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, to lend their full support to those regional efforts, which were vital to the achievement of global objectives.

8. His delegation welcomed the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which it had ratified on 14 October 1994 in Paris. It also welcomed the inclusion of an annex on implementation of the Convention in the northern Mediterranean region.

9. Mr. BASMAJIEV (Bulgaria) expressed his country's satisfaction at the positive results achieved in the implementation of the decisions of the Earth Summit; none the less, much remained to be done in that regard. It was particularly important to continue the efforts aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to resolve the most pressing issues, particularly in the area of financial resources, the transfer of environmentally sound technology and cross-sectoral issues.

10. The involvement of other international organizations and specialized agencies from the United Nations system in the follow-up process of the Rio commitments was important. He stressed the need to strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation. In that connection, his delegation attached particular importance to the ministerial conference on environment and sustainable development of the European countries, to be held at Sofia in autumn 1995.

11. Bulgaria believing that the success of the Earth Summit would depend largely on action taken at the national level. It was therefore transforming its environmental and socio-economic policies into an overall strategy for achieving sustainable development, which would stress institution-building and national capacity-building. It had established a National Nature Conservation Service, National Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development under the Ministry of Environment, and an Inter-institutional Committee for Priority Environmental Projects and Development under the authority of the Prime Minister as a prototype of the future National Council for Sustainable Development. With assistance from the World Bank, it had updated its national action plan to the year 2000, and was drafting a framework law on biological diversity and formulating special programmes for reducing sulphur and nitrogen oxide emissions and greenhouse gas emissions.

12. Bulgaria was, however, experiencing serious difficulties in implementing its national programmes owing to insufficient financial resources and the negative impact of a number of external factors. The mobilizing of adequate financial resources for the implementation of the Rio commitments should therefore be one of the most important tasks of the international community. The restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility was a major achievement in that regard. His delegation was also of the view that national Governments should promote environmental policies and economic mechanisms aimed at utilizing all potential available resources. In that connection, Bulgaria was pursuing a policy of decentralization which enlarged the role of the local authorities and separate economic entities in the implementation of environmental projects. As a country faced with serious economic difficulties and a heavy external debt burden, Bulgaria supported the proposals for debt relief and, in particular, the principle of debt-for-nature swaps. It had submitted a debt-for-nature swap proposal to the Consultative Group of the World Bank.

13. Lastly, Bulgaria recognized that the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and national capacity-building in the sphere of environmental protection were of paramount importance for the incorporation of the environmental dimension into the overall process of development. However, it

lacked sufficient funding for research and development and for the purchase of high technology products and urgently needed wider access to high technology products on a concessional (grants, soft loans) basis. At the same time, it also had highly qualified scientific personnel. That potential could be more efficiently used within the scope of United Nations activities in the field of science and technology for environmentally sound development.

14. Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea) said that the subject of the environment and sustainable development was of vital importance to all nations from the perspective of, firstly, the indiscriminate depletion of natural resources and global pollution, which would lead to serious degradation of the regional and global environment, and, secondly, the destruction of the habitat, housing Earth's biological resources, which inhibited the attainment of sustainable development in the long term.

15. Papua New Guinea was of the view that the conservation of biological diversity was an important aspect of sustainable development. There was a growing realization that bio-diversity was a resource which must be conserved, managed and developed in a manner that might open up further opportunities. Without a comprehensive policy on natural resource exploitation, developing countries in need of revenues might be blindly destroying habitats which housed valuable genetic resources that would provide unique potential for the future development of agriculture and agro-industrial products, including pharmaceutics.

16. The best way to protect the Earth's biological resources, a task that was fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, was by promoting international cooperation and a greater awareness among Governments and peoples so that they would make conscious and responsible decisions that catered to the needs of future generations. Papua New Guinea had actively participated in many international and regional forums, such as the Intergovernmental Working Group on Global Forests, held at Ottawa (Canada), and would continue to support efforts to establish an internationally accepted definition of the concept of "sustainable forest management". In addition, the Melanesian spearhead group, which consisted of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, had met earlier that year and had endorsed a tripartite declaration on natural forest management, which was also a major theme of the recent Heads of Government Meeting of the South Pacific Forum, held at Brisbane (Australia).

17. With regard to fisheries, Papua New Guinea had always played an active role in the work of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, which had also benefited from the work done by the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency.

18. Finally, Papua New Guinea strongly endorsed the South Pacific Forum's decision to oppose the dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific Ocean, the establishment of facilities for the storage or incineration of such waste, as well as transboundary movements of toxic waste and nuclear testing in the region. In that connection, it sympathized with the Marshall Islands, a neighbouring country whose population suffered from the effects of past nuclear

testing, and would continue to work with that and other neighbouring countries in order to prevent the establishment in the region of storage facilities for hazardous wastes.

19. Mr. KALPAGÉ (Sri Lanka) said that, since the Rio Conference, some progress had been made towards the achievement of sustainable development, but not as much as had been hoped. Progress had been limited to the conclusion of the follow-up conferences and the recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its previous two sessions. Moreover, the developing countries had not implemented those recommendations, since they had not received any financial or technical assistance and, in general, the developed countries, owing to a lack of political will, had failed to address the problem of overconsumption and inappropriate production technologies.

20. However, the funds and technology that had been committed at Rio were crucial to the implementation by the developing countries of Agenda 21 and the activities of the follow-up conferences. The flow of resources for sustainable development in the South, especially private sector financial flows, must be encouraged and the Commission on Sustainable Development and other institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and United Nations agencies, should establish linkages in order to create a supportive environment for the implementation of Agenda 21.

21. Sri Lanka considered that trade was a means of mobilizing the resources needed by developing countries to implement Agenda 21 and therefore advocated a fair and open trading system. In that connection, the Commission on Sustainable Development could ensure that such a system was implemented and could also promote interim measures, such as a review of the Generalized System of Preferences, to help those developing countries which were adversely affected by the abolition of the System. In order to fulfil those objectives, the Commission should maintain linkages with the World Trade Organization.

22. Sri Lanka welcomed the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, but cautioned the international community that it should support the efforts of those countries to overcome the problem of desertification. It also supported the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and hoped that the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks would establish a fair regime in the high seas for the sustainable management of marine resources. That new regime, to be established within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, should be implemented by having recourse to regional organizations, such as the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation Conference.

23. Sri Lanka was convinced that sustainable development could be achieved only if the international community gave high priority to the problems of poverty and unemployment and that addressing those problems required the formulation of a new strategy. The Commission on Sustainable Development could be the forum in which to formulate a multi-pronged strategy to support the efforts of developing

countries to remove constraints, such as the lack of resources, technology, capacity and access to markets, and also to resolve the problem of low commodity prices.

24. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the gap between the rich and poor, mass poverty and starvation were still greater threats to universal peace and a stronger affront to man's dignity than ecological problems. The international community should therefore reconcile development with the preservation of man's natural legacy. Israel faced the future with the certitude that protection of the environment was not contrary to development and that the two concepts were integrated.

25. The international community should therefore continue its cooperation on matters related to the environment and sustainable development in order to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21. The primary forum for such cooperation should be the Commission on Sustainable Development and Israel welcomed the Commission's efforts to enhance the activities of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and interregional levels and to achieve sustainable development in all countries. The Commission should also provide an intergovernmental forum for the exchange of information on national and multilateral experiences. In that respect, Israel was of the view that, at the following session of the Commission, interested parties should discuss the formulation and application of national strategies for sustainable development. It was important for the United Nations to maintain a balance between environment- and development-related issues and programmes. The Rio Conference, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Conference on Population and Development, the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development to be held at Copenhagen, and the various conventions, such as the International Convention to Combat Desertification, constituted the basis for developing a global strategy aimed at ensuring a better future for humankind. Israel urged the international community to strengthen the capability of the Global Environment Facility to finance programmes for the protection of the environment, in the execution of which UNDP, UNEP and other United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations had an important role to play.

26. Technology was a key element in sustainable development and it should be adaptable to the specific needs of developing countries. That was why research in Israel focused on the use of water resources and the desalination of sea water and brackish water in the desert. The Middle East possessed vast desert land and meagre water resources but the appropriate technology was available to turn the desert into fertile land. Israel invited all countries, particularly its neighbours in the Middle East, to join in its research work and to help in finding solutions to the problem of desertification. In cooperation with Japan, Israel would be convening an international seminar on land and water management. The human factor was also very important to development and the international community must therefore direct increased attention to the development of human resources, which in Israel had become the key to technological expansion and to technical and economic cooperation with other countries.

27. Regional cooperation was an essential element for the implementation of environmental protection programmes. For that reason, in the multilateral talks within the framework of the Middle East peace process, projects for regional cooperation in the areas of environmental protection and development were being formulated. In that connection, the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, the multilateral negotiations and the Casablanca conference would help to promote regional cooperation. It was to be hoped that peace would also be established in all the neighbouring countries so that all efforts and resources could be devoted to environmental protection and sustainable development.

28. Mrs. DAUD IBRAHIM (Indonesia) said that, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/190, important intergovernmental activities had taken place, such as the meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the negotiations on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification, the Barbados Conference and the negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Like those activities, the second United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II), scheduled to be held in 1996, would help to implement the recommendations of Agenda 21.

29. The problems associated with straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks should be settled as soon as possible. In that connection, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had agreed to convene an intergovernmental conference to promote the implementation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and General Assembly resolution 47/192 had set the intergovernmental negotiating process in motion. Thus, the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks had been convened and charged with adopting measures to address such problems as the inadequate management of fishing on the high seas, the over-exploitation of certain stocks, unregulated fishing, excessive fleet size, insufficient selection of gear and, more importantly, the lack of cooperation between States. One of those measures, a draft agreement drawn up at the fourth session of the Conference, would serve as a basis for future negotiations on the question. Since the Conference had not completed its work, two additional preparatory sessions should be held in 1995.

30. She urged the international community to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and create an economic environment conducive to the achievement of the Conference's goals. Since progress in sustainable development was a precondition for a meaningful contribution by developing countries to the preservation of the global environment, the international community must provide sufficient resources and appropriate technology to fulfil the commitments undertaken at the Rio Conference. It was to be hoped that greater attention would be focused on those issues when an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 was conducted in 1997.

31. As an archipelagic State with the longest coastline in the world, Indonesia was deeply concerned about the effects of both global warming and the rise in the sealevel. It therefore supported the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and would do its utmost to ensure the success of the first

session of the Conference of the Parties scheduled to take place in Berlin in 1995.

32. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that in considering the draft agreement proposed by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the Committee should be mindful of the background to the original initiative taken by the international community in response to a sharp decline in fish stocks world wide. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 16 November 1994 should strengthen the legal foundation on which the Conference was built. The Caribbean Community was convinced that the dual regimes for the exclusive economic zone and the high seas established by the Convention remained valid and should not be a subject for negotiation during the deliberations of the Conference. Members of CARICOM were also of the view that the draft agreement for the conservation of fish stocks and for the sustainable exploitation of high-seas fisheries represented a timely initiative and they were gratified that the precautionary approach was a common thread running throughout the agreement. The successful application of the precautionary approach would be dependent on the commitment of members of the international community to support responsible fishing without waiting for the agreement to be adopted.

33. All States should participate actively in the Conference so that the outcome would reflect a global consensus within the framework established by the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Developing countries should also receive adequate support in order to ensure that they were able to participate actively in the proceedings of the Conference and that they had the capacity to implement the outcome. The Caribbean Community would state its position on the substantive issues at the next session of the Conference. As far as procedural matters were concerned, it was of the view that the proposal for two additional sessions should be endorsed so that the Conference could complete its important work.

34. Mrs. CARAYANIDES (Australia), speaking on behalf of the nine States members of the South Pacific Forum that were also Members of the United Nations, said that the Forum had adopted an unprecedented range of measures to promote sustainable development and environmental protection and to improve revenue returns to Forum island countries from their resources. It had also established a regional consultative mechanism to coordinate the implementation of the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Forum had also condemned the international trade in endangered species and welcomed the establishment by the International Whaling Commission of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. The Forum stressed the importance of providing the opportunity for countries in the region to participate in inter-sessional meetings related to environmental issues of relevance to them and urged States hosting such meetings to ensure openness and transparency in organizing them.

35. The effects of climate change, the rise in the sealevel and climate variables were of critical concern to the countries of the South Pacific region. In August 1994, the heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum countries had

stressed that global warming and the rise in the sealevel were among the most serious threats to the region and to the survival of small island States. Members of the Forum urged other countries to share in their commitment to promote the prompt implementation and strengthening of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

36. The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks was of great significance to the countries of the South Pacific region since fish were a vital part of their diet and their economies. For some of those countries, fish represented the most significant opportunity for future economic development. The Forum felt that the Conference should produce a legally binding instrument that would provide for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The Forum also fully supported the decision to convene two further sessions in 1995 in order to enable the Conference to complete its work.

37. The countries of the South Pacific region attached great importance to the full implementation of the global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing. They had taken measures to that end, both individually and collectively, for instance, the Convention on the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift Nets in the South Pacific. They appreciated the considerable efforts made by some distant-water-fishing nations, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, and invited all the remaining countries of the Asia and Pacific region, as well as distant-water-fishing States to sign the Convention or its Protocols without delay. Although that destructive fishing practice no longer prevailed in the region as a result of the initiative of the South Pacific countries and because of the cooperation shown by States which fished in the region, the Forum was deeply concerned by reports that it might be continuing in other parts of the world. Accordingly, they requested the Secretary-General to continue to compile information on the nature and effectiveness of measures employed by States to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/215, and urged all members of the international community to implement the resolution and to report to the Secretary-General any activity or conduct inconsistent with its terms.

38. Mr. HLA MAUNG (Myanmar) said that he was heartened to note that the Commission on Sustainable Development had launched an integrated review of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference on Environment and Development at the national, regional and international levels. Agenda 21 underlined the fact that humanity stood at a crossroads: either the economic gap within and between countries could be allowed to widen and the ecosystem on which the whole world depended could continue to deteriorate, or policies could be adopted to ensure both environmental protection and economic development.

39. The Asia and Pacific region was composed of a large number of nations differing in size, demographic pattern, natural resources and level of development. While it was true that the region as a whole had registered remarkable successes in recent years and that high growth rates were more the norm than the exception, environmental conditions had deteriorated in many

countries, largely as a result of poverty and underdevelopment. Alleviating poverty, therefore, was no longer simply a moral issue, but a practical imperative. Degradation of the land, forests and oceans would continue as long as increasing numbers of citizens of developing countries were compelled to exploit the environment for their survival. In Myanmar, as in many other countries of the region, the source of the problem did not lie in industrial development or unsustainable lifestyles. For that reason, the Agenda 21 proposals on a wide range of policies - population, health care, education, women and youth - were being taken seriously at the national level. The Government of Myanmar was giving priority to activities to combat poverty, particularly in the mountainous border areas. Modern methods of agriculture were being introduced and industrial plants were equipped to neutralize the harmful effect of effluents and wastes on the environment. The Government continually monitored the situation with regard to the exploitation of forest resources to ensure their sustainability. In keeping with the proposals in chapter 11 of Agenda 21, it had been working to conserve existing forests and to expand areas under forest cover, particularly in mountain areas, dry and semi-arid zones and coastal areas where mangrove forests thrived.

40. In order to implement environmental policies effectively, the Government had, in February 1990, formed a national commission to coordinate environmental matters internally and to deal with foreign institutions and international organizations in the field. That commission and the Ministry of Forestry had jointly sponsored an ESCAP/UNEP regional seminar on the people's participation in mangrove rehabilitation and management, which had been held in February 1994.

41. In reviewing the results obtained since the Rio Conference, it should be noted that, while some new ideas had been proposed (for example, green taxes) and some innovative approaches had been discussed in the Commission on Sustainable Development, the funds promised for the implementation of Agenda 21 had not materialized. Meanwhile, the developed countries, with less than 25 per cent of the world's population, consumed more than 75 per cent of its raw materials. The developed countries and the developing countries must work in partnership, and technical assistance and environmentally sound technology must be supplied to the developing countries on non-commercial and preferential terms in order for them to achieve sustainable development. The attainment of that goal required the participation not only of Governments, but also of organizations and individuals. Greater awareness of environmental issues at the grass-roots level was therefore needed, as noted in chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

42. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) noted the progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments made at the Rio Conference, especially the signing of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particulary in Africa, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the forthcoming first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at which the Commission had adopted a significant body of decisions regarding its programme of work. At that second session of the Commission, his delegation had expressed its concern that interest in global

environmental issues was waning within the international community, particularly in the mass media, and had stressed that it was essential for the Commission to have the necessary political support to address the major issues in the area of sustainable development. One way for the Commission to secure that support was to address squarely the root causes of the problems and to express its views on controversial issues, such as production and consumption patterns and trade and development. Its decisions and recommendations should therefore be made more specific, although important guidelines and principles had been established. In that connection, Japan welcomed the Commission's decision to conduct an annual review of progress in the implementation of its decisions.

43. In the area of trade and development, Japan believed that trade and environment policies should be mutually supportive and that the methods of furthering environmental objectives through the international trade framework should be agreed upon on a multilateral basis. Japan therefore attached great importance to interaction between the Commission on Sustainable Development, the World Trade Organization and other relevant bodies such as UNCTAD and UNEP.

44. Since international partnership and national responsibility were the watchwords in efforts to implement the agreements reached in Rio, he emphasized the importance of countries sharing their different national experience in the implementation of Agenda 21. To that end, it would be useful to produce case studies of that experience and to submit the findings to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Ways of improving working methods must also be examined: less time should be spent on general debate and more should be devoted to the consideration of specific issues. One such issue was that of forests, with regard to which various commendable initiatives were being developed; those initiatives should be coordinated so that they complemented each other, as part of the preparatory work for the next session of the Commission.

45. It was also important to ensure the effectiveness of inter-sessional activities. In that connection, he was pleased that more specific mandates had been given to the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Finance and to the new Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Opened-ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues, whose work was to be completed before the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

46. In the area of finance, Malaysia and Japan planned to organize jointly another meeting of experts to try to identify the optimum mix of financial instruments for funding the various sectors as well as intersectoral activities. The two countries were working with Israel to organize a symposium on the integrated management of land and water resources. Its outcome would contribute to the consideration of sectoral issues at the next session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which could continue to rely on Japan's cooperation in carrying out its important work.

47. Mr. GEORGE (Federated States of Micronesia) agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Australia on behalf of the countries of the South Pacific Forum and underscored the importance his country attached to the

progress made during the past year and the need for the Committee to ensure that progress continued. Upon being admitted to membership in the United Nations, the Federated States of Micronesia had become involved in activities related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and was deeply appreciative of the consideration given to questions of interest to small island States. Now that the problems and their possible solutions had been defined and regulatory mechanisms established in a number of fields (such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Global Environment Facility), it was time for substantive action. In moving from negotiation to implementation, however, it should be borne in mind that those programmes were not just the old development processes dressed up in new clothing; they represented an entirely new approach, which linked environment and sustainable development as positive, complementary priorities that were equally important to both the North and the South. Implementing all the measures adopted so far would mean that assistance from the developed world to the developing world would increasingly take on the character of investment; consequently, those nations in possession of the resources required for the achievement of common goals must not hesitate to use them.

48. Regarding the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which 94 States had already become parties, it would be extremely difficult to take effective steps to meet the threat of human-induced climate change without the universal participation of the international community. Small island States, which would be the first to be affected by global climate change, were confident that the first Conference of the Parties, to be held in Berlin in March 1995, would consider a proposed protocol to the Convention which would require specific reductions in the emission of greenhouse gases by developed countries according to a specific timetable; they also hoped that action of the kind required under the Alliance of Small Island States protocol would be initiated at the very outset of the Convention's implementation, recent scientific studies having shown that the gravity of the problem permitted no delay. The developing countries and particularly small island States must adopt a variety of measures to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change where those effects could not be avoided; in the case of islands and low-lying coastal areas, the threat lay in the possibility of sealevel rise. During the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee negotiations, some developed countries had expressed misgivings over the possible amount of adaptation costs, even though the Convention did provide for assistance to developing countries, especially the most vulnerable, in meeting those costs. His delegation was greatly encouraged by the outcome of discussions at the most recent meetings of that Committee, at which agreement had been reached on a three-stage approach that would bring greater certainty to the concept and lend confidence to future discussions on the matter.

49. A critical subject that still awaited detailed discussion by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was the meaning of the term "incremental costs" as it appeared in the Convention. There was reason to fear that if the parties to the Convention delayed any longer the task of defining the term, it would be defined by default along very narrow lines by the interim financial mechanism. That should not be allowed to happen, since it would severely

restrict the participation of developing countries in projects designed to achieve Convention objectives.

50. Development was not a priority but a necessity for many island countries, among them his own. Any island country must examine carefully the prospect of substantial economic gain from outside ventures that were attracted for any reason, including geographic situation. But even development imperatives must be approached with the knowledge that those countries could not long survive if they did not protect their resources, especially their marine environment, the loss of which would lead to their ruin.

51. The Federated States of Micronesia was fully committed to the promotion of responsible fishing practices within its own exclusive economic zone and the zones of its neighbours in the Pacific region as well as in the contiguous high seas areas. Sustainable development of living marine resources could only be achieved through rational utilization and responsible fishing practices. In that connection, his Government supported the idea that outcome of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should take the form of a binding legal document; it was also deeply concerned about the persistence of the destructive practice of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in some parts of the world, and joined in calling for full implementation of the global moratorium on the practice.

52. Coral reefs were another key element of the marine environment that must be preserved. Ocean water quality could itself become a threat to life if the precautionary principle was not strictly applied on a regional basis: coastal States should refrain from activities which might irretrievably pollute the water with toxic or radioactive substances.

53. He expressed his gratitude to the donor countries which had contributed to voluntary funds or made bilateral contributions; without their assistance his country's representatives would have been unable to attend many of the meetings on environment and development. He hoped the donors would continue to contribute to the funds to the extent necessary.

54. Miss MONTAÑO (Bolivia) recalled that the Rio Conference, at which the concept of sustainable development had come to the fore, had recognized that problems of environment and development were global in nature and that their solutions should also be global. The industrialized countries' environmental responsibilities and the right of all States to development had also been stressed. That had led to recognition of the absolute need for developing countries to have access to sufficient financial resources and appropriate technology in order to achieve the goals of equitable and sustainable development. She therefore urged the developed countries to make greater efforts to achieve the suggested goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance.

55. As a result of the Rio Conference, a Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Environment had been created in Bolivia which linked social and economic affairs; it incorporated two new components, the sustainable use of natural

resources and institutional sustainability, and functioned as the governing body of the planning system, which covered both national planning and natural resource management.

56. Efforts to achieve long-term sustainability in her country focused on four key areas: the economic sphere, in order to integrate the country into international markets; the social sphere, in order to redefine development in terms of equity based on a redistribution of wealth; the environmental sphere, to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, and the political sphere, in order to promote the transition from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy. The new model of sustainable development required changes in the factors of development, production and consumption: the difficulty lay in society's low level of commitment, owing to social factors. The application of the new model required the support of financial resources to respond to the pressures of the most vulnerable groups in society, in order to enable society to be more receptive to the transition; in that context, education and communications and strategies to facilitate sectoral and multilateral coordination and cooperation must play a fundamental role.

57. Lastly, she urged the international community, when establishing economic and social policies, to honour the commitments adopted at the Rio Conference and underscored the need to consolidate and strengthen the Commission on Sustainable Development, to which end she favoured broad participation by the competent authorities in the high-level segment of the Commission, which should help to strengthen international cooperation. She referred in that connection to the proposal by her country to host a meeting in 1996 of the presidents of countries in the hemisphere to deal with sustainable development.

58. Mr. MOJOUKHOV (Belarus) welcomed the initial implementation of Agenda 21 at the regional level and of the Barbados Programme of Action and Declaration, as well as the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. He agreed with the representative of the Russian Federation that the Commission on Sustainable Development should maintain closer working relations with regional commissions, in particular, with the regional commissions of the United Nations.

59. With regard to the preparations for the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, he proposed that it should consider the possibility of elaborating an international convention on the protection and regeneration of forests on the basis of the Rio principles concerning forests and inter-sessional negotiations. He was also in favour of forging a new global solidarity which should be based on principles 6, 12 and 27 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, but without losing sight of the regional perspective. It was essential to make progress towards global sustainable development. However, that would require the support of the countries of central and eastern Europe, in particular, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

60. The States in transition were striving to restructure their societies, and it was therefore extremely important to establish a foundation for sustainable development from the outset, by introducing environmentally rational models of production and consumption, macroeconomic policies which respected the environment and micro-economic policies which included indicators to measure sustainable development. His country was one of the most environmentally vulnerable countries in transition and it faced serious obstacles on its path towards sustainable development, since the pressing need to emerge from its economic crisis did not permit it adequately to confront environmental problems, such as those resulting from the accident at Chernobyl. His country had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993 but was not yet in a position to implement it. However, the most complex problems had been those involving the execution of industrial reconversion projects and the implementation of international agreements on the reduction of conventional and nuclear weapons. Other countries of the region were in a similar position. Accordingly, there was an undeniable need to join forces to prevent the crisis in central and eastern Europe from exerting an impact at the global level.

61. His country had proposed that in 1996 the United Nations should convene an international conference on sustainable development in the countries with economies in transition, in which the participation of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other international bodies and organizations would be important. The conference should be open to observers from other States and international institutions.

62. As to the details of the proposal, he wished to provide the following clarifications: first, his country would like a constructive debate on the proposal to be held during the current session of the Second Committee and believed that the matter should be resolved no later than at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The proposal did not rule out other possibilities, such as the convening during the coming two or three years of other international conferences on global or sectoral development issues, such as reconversion or interregional projects for South-South cooperation. In addition, the proposed conference could serve as the preparatory forum for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21.

63. Secondly, the objective of the proposed conference should not be to formulate a general multisectoral programme of action, since an environmental protection programme for central and eastern Europe already had been adopted at the Lucerne Conference on Environment for Europe (Lucerne, 1993). Moreover, it should be emphasized that Europe had gained experience in cooperation to resolve environmental, social and economic problems outside the United Nations system. The countries with economies in transition, for their part, also had acquired experience at the interregional and subregional levels, particularly within the general framework of cooperation with the European Union, the countries of the Visegrad Group, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Central European Initiative. In the United Nations system, certain bodies and programmes had

carried out activities in that field, in particular, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee on Science and Technology for Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Committee on Natural Resources, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNCTAD, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Environment Fund and, also within the United Nations system, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These and other efforts must be coordinated in order to derive maximum benefit from available resources.

64. Thirdly, with regard to preparations for the conference, the United Nations could serve as a catalyst and as the coordinating body. Looking ahead to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, his delegation would like the following to occur: the Secretary-General should submit a report on sustainable development in the countries with economies in transition, the Commission on Sustainable Development should prepare a study on the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in the region, UNEP should assess the impact of the global environmental situation on the central and eastern European region, the Economic Commission for Europe should develop regional cooperation programmes and the United Nations system should elaborate programmes for the coordination of international cooperation for sustainable development to complement the programme adopted at Lucerne in 1993.

65. Fourthly, in addition to the question of coordination, which also should be taken up at the Conference, there were other important issues, including the implementation of the GLOBE initiative (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment), participation in the monitoring of global environmental problems, cooperation between the countries with economies in transition and the developing countries in areas of common interest, in particular, the exchange of ecologically sound technologies and experience in the field of sustainable development. His country was particularly interested in a project to improve the environment in Soligorsk and in the Minsk region, in which the World Environment Fund could participate.

66. Fifthly, the countries with economies in transition themselves could assume partial responsibility for the financing of and preparations for the conference. A portion of the costs could be covered by their contributions in their national currencies to UNEP and UNDP and by voluntary contributions from non-governmental donors. The cost of conference services and other services could be borne as far as possible by interested regional and subregional institutions concerned with cooperation.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Friday, 21 October 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: (continued)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/223-E/1994/105, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/307-S/1994/958, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1 and A/49/479)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/49/463)

(b) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/49/485)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued) (A/49/254 and A/49/522)

1. Mr. AL-HABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that many of the commitments that had been made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had yet to be translated into action. In 1993, the ratio of official development assistance (ODA) to the gross national product (GNP) of donor countries had declined to 0.29 per cent, the lowest level since 1973. Moreover, the resources of the Global Environment Facility fell far short of the amount required for the implementation of Agenda 21.

2. The international community should endeavour to maintain the robust political support for sustainable development by focusing on action-oriented measures. The ad hoc inter-sessional groups of the Commission on Sustainable Development should seek innovative approaches for mobilizing new and additional financial resources and promoting the transfer of environmentally sound technology. Coordination between the Commission and other international organizations dealing with various sectoral and cross-sectoral issues was of great importance. In that respect, priority should be given to strengthening working relations with the Global Environment Facility.

3. Recalling that, in resolution 47/190, the General Assembly had decided to convene, not later than 1997, a special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 and had requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report containing recommendations on the format, scope and organizational aspects of such a special session, he noted that no mention had been made of that important subject. He also noted that, at its first session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had decided to undertake at its 1997 session an overall review of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21. Perhaps the Secretariat could provide some clarification on the matter.

4. In keeping with its commitment to sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21, the Islamic Republic of Iran had established a High-level Committee on Sustainable Development whose main objective was to

coordinate environmental policies and programmes. Under the auspices of the Committee, national strategies on sustainable development and multilateral environmental cooperation were being prepared. Moreover, given the magnitude of the problem of desertification of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a special commission on desertification had been established.

5. The Iranian Parliament was in the final stages of its ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Various projects were being implemented to reduce pollution, increase public awareness about the environment and encourage public participation in environmental activities. His Government was aware of the importance of regional cooperation for the protection of the environment and was cooperating with other States to preserve the environmental and ecological integrity of the fragile Caspian Sea ecosystem.

6. Mr. ŽEBRÁKOVSKÝ (Czech Republic) said that one of the most important results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The very recent changes and improvements in the work of the Commission, specifically the successful efforts to make it more transparent, dynamic, and efficient, would enable the Commission to make further significant progress. His delegation welcomed the Commission's efforts to explore in greater detail the potential of such important cross-sectoral issues as sustainable patterns of production and consumption and the introduction of innovative ways of financing sustainable development and facilitating the transfer of technology.

7. His delegation appreciated the increased emphasis on the relationship between trade, development and environment as an important means of implementing Agenda 21. The Commission should, in close cooperation with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), become more involved in that area.

8. The mandate of the Commission called for continuous work, which could not be accomplished at its annual sessions. Unless the Commission's inter-sessional activities were carried out on a more systematic and coordinated basis, the Commission might not fulfil its expected role as the principal advisory and coordinating body in the field of sustainable development. Cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Commission was crucial to the implementation of the goals of both organizations.

9. With a view to implementing the agreements of the Rio Conference and Agenda 21, the Czech Republic had established a National Committee on Sustainable Development and had pledged to increase its contribution to the core fund of the Global Environment Facility and play a more active role in the Facility's operations. The Czech Republic had ratified most of the main United Nations conventions on the environment and was actively involved in their implementation at both the national and international levels. In general, the Czech Republic was prepared to take part in negotiations on new protocols to existing environmental conventions and, possibly, a global convention on protection of forests. In cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable

Development, the Czech Republic was organizing a Workshop on Economic Instruments for Sustainable Development, which would be held in Prague in January 1995.

10. Mr. ELISSEEV (Ukraine) said that the results of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had shown that the Commission was gradually becoming an intergovernmental structure capable of promoting a multilateral dialogue and adopting important consensus decisions on problems of sustainable development. However, unless the international economic climate improved and donor countries increased their ODA, it would be difficult to implement fully the decisions and recommendations of the Rio Conference.

11. One way of improving the Commission's work was to integrate sectoral and cross-sectoral discussions and to equalize relations among the various sectors. The Commission should continue its consideration of such important aspects of sustainable development as environment and development. The Commission should adopt a more balanced approach to activities at the international level and pay more attention to countries' specific needs and efforts undertaken at the national level. There should be greater linkage between the development of sectoral cooperation programmes and the resources needed for their implementation.

12. It was important to find effective ways to increase cooperation between the Commission for Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental mechanisms, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and Habitat II.

13. His delegation welcomed the restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility. It was important to make use of the Facility's capacity to strengthen priority programmes in both the developing countries and countries with economies in transition. For most countries with economies in transition, revenue from foreign economic activities were one of the most important sources of financing sustainable development policies. In that regard, his delegation supported the proposal made by the representative of Belarus on the convening, under United Nations auspices, of an international conference on the sustainable development of countries with economies in transition.

14. His delegation attached great importance to the work of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and was in favour of responsible fishing in the world's oceans and seas in accordance with international agreements. His delegation would not accept any attempts by littoral States to legalize unilateral measures to protect fish stocks and to extend them to areas of the high seas that were adjacent to exclusive economic zones. The mandate of the Conference should be extended to 1995 in order to enable it to complete work on the draft agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks.

15. Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the 12 countries members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Caribbean countries were the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. Both as a subregion and as members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the CARICOM countries had always maintained that the industrialized countries, which accounted for the largest share of global emissions of greenhouse gases, must bear exclusive responsibility for containing, reducing and eliminating the damage caused to the environment by the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Those concerns were adequately addressed in the AOSIS draft protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, which called for new commitments on the part of the industrialized countries to limit their emissions of greenhouse gases. It also encouraged the developed countries that were parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to adopt specific targets and timetables to limit or reduce other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The CARICOM countries associated themselves fully with the statement made by the Group of 77 on the concept of joint implementation.

16. The CARICOM countries were keenly aware of the need for technical and scientific expertise and access to the transfer of environmentally sound technology. They therefore welcomed the initiatives taken by the interim secretariat of the Convention in cooperation with other United Nations organizations with regard to an information exchange system and a training programme outlined in paragraphs 47 and 48 of the report of the Secretary-General on protection of global climate environment for present and future generations of mankind (A/49/485).

17. Among the issues remaining to be resolved was the location of the Convention's permanent secretariat. The secretariat should be accessible to all developing countries, but in particular to small island States. Those States were also concerned about their ability to participate in the meetings of parties to the Convention because of the inability of the interim secretariat to provide financial assistance to enable their experts to attend. He called for additional extrabudgetary contributions in order to maintain the two special voluntary funds established under General Assembly resolution 45/212.

18. The entry into force of the Framework Convention provided the international community with the means to arrest global warming and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. However, it was only a first step. The draft protocol presented by the AOSIS group provided a targeted framework for the reduction of greenhouse gases. The debate on its provisions should begin at the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, with subsequent adoption at the first Conference of Parties.

19. Mrs. SHARMA (Nepal) said that sustainable development could not be based on compromise. Her delegation agreed on the need for additional efforts from the developed countries in the areas of transfer of environmentally sound technology and capacity-building.

20. Nepal had ratified both the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Their entry into force showed the readiness and deep commitment among the developing countries to follow the path of sustainable development.

21. Her delegation welcomed the Commission's intentions to increase cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. A truly global programme of sustainable development could not be achieved unless the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable were met. In the least developed countries, poverty was the root cause of all problems related to localized environmental degradation. The impact of decisions currently being taken would continue far into the future. All countries must act as partners in order to maintain the momentum generated by UNCED.

22. Mrs. JUNEJO (Pakistan) said that the documents approved at the Rio Conference constituted a global recognition of the twin imperatives of development with equity and development without damage to the environment. The international community must ensure that the inequality in the evolution of international economic relations was not repeated in the new partnership to promote sustainable development.

23. The Commission on Sustainable Development was perhaps the only intergovernmental forum dealing with the issue of changing consumption and production patterns. Since the provision of new and additional resources was an essential condition for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, it was disappointing to see that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was being launched with only $2 billion; the indicative financial requirement for the implementation of Agenda 21 had been estimated at $125 billion per year. Access for their exports to the markets of developed countries was essential if the developing countries were to achieve sustainable development. The recent stress on environmental conditionalities was a disturbing trend and was inconsistent with the principle of a free multilateral trading system. The Governments of developed countries should identify which were the environment related provisions in their trade regulations which discriminated against developing countries.

24. Global action was needed to implement the various international conventions signed in recent years, to mobilize opinion and establish a framework for cooperation and adequate financial and technical assistance. However, much of the concrete action would take place at the national and local levels. Pakistan had been among the pioneers in national environmental planning and management, with a National Conservation Strategy that predated the Rio Summit.

25. Mr. PIERRE (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which were members of the United Nations, said that the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States marked the first major action in implementation of Agenda 21. He also noted with satisfaction that the Framework Convention on Climate Change had entered into force and that the Convention on Biological Diversity would soon do so.

26. While welcoming the agreement reached on the replenishment of the resources of the Global Environment Facility, the CARICOM countries remained gravely concerned by the developed countries' failure to meet the financial commitments which they had undertaken and which were essential for the full and effective implementation of Agenda 21. Many commitments in the areas of technology transfer, capacity-building and changing consumption and production patterns also remained unfulfilled. The emphasis placed on those areas by the Commission on Sustainable Development was welcome. Special responsibility for changing consumption and production patterns lay with the developed countries. Developing societies also were confronted with patterns of consumption and production that were detrimental to sustainable development; however, as the Commission itself had recognized, for them, eradicating poverty and meeting basic human needs were overriding priorities.

27. The Commission's work should become more focused and less theoretical. The CARICOM countries were of the view that it was not too soon to begin discussing the format, scope and organizational aspects of the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in 1997 to review the implementation of Agenda 21.

28. Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) said that the preparations by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change for the first Conference of the Parties had amounted to a renegotiation of the commitments entered into at the Rio Conference. It had been recognized in Rio de Janeiro that there were common but differentiated responsibilities with respect to the control of greenhouse gases. Developed countries had to take the lead in reducing those emissions; at the same time, developing countries should not be prevented from undertaking development activities out of concern for the environment. Accordingly, it had been agreed that additional resources and technology at concessional terms should be provided to the developing countries in order to enable them to control their emissions. Those resources, however, had not been forthcoming.

29. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was seeking reaffirmation in practical terms of the principles accepted in Rio de Janeiro. The restructuring of the Global Environment Facility had gone some way towards resolving the problem relating to the financing mechanism. However, resources available under the Facility were still extremely limited and its role in relation to the Conference of the Parties was still in doubt. Under the Convention, the Conference of the Parties was the supreme policy-making body responsible, inter alia, for establishing eligibility criteria for financing. Serious consideration would have to be given to procedures for the funding of programmes that accorded with the priorities of developing countries.

30. Another difficulty consisted in the lack of clarity of several concepts in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as agreed full incremental costs and joint implementation. There was a fear that joint implementation by developed countries of activities in developing countries might dilute the commitments of the developed countries themselves. In addition, there had been no agreement as to how technology transfer on a concessional basis could be achieved.

31. In India's view, the main problem was that the developed countries lacked the political will to implement the Convention. There had been an awareness even in Rio that the international community would have to strengthen the commitments of the industrialized countries and find a means of extending them beyond the year 2000. However, without agreement on a fundamental basis for implementing the Convention, negotiations on a protocol to extend commitments might become a distraction and should be deferred.

32. Mr. DIAZ (Venezuela) said that as a member of the Commission, Venezuela was concerned at the difficulty that had been experienced in establishing a genuine process of dialogue during meetings, except in the case of the panels held during the High-Level Segment. Moreover, the content of the decisions adopted tended to be vague repetitions of Agenda 21 and were not action-oriented. Perhaps more time should be spent formulating practical recommendations rather than on making speeches.

33. The intersessional meetings on sectoral themes organized by some countries and international organizations outside the ambit of the Commission on Sustainable Development were another source of concern. Access to those meetings was limited, particularly for developing countries, and the nature of the recommendations that they adopted cast some doubt on their scope and reliability. There was a risk that they might complicate rather than facilitate the intergovernmental discussions. In that context, his Government reiterated its support for the intergovernmental machinery in the form of ad hoc working groups on sectoral and intersectoral themes set up by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Moreover, the selective nature of the themes considered tended to marginalize the discussion of such basic intersectoral issues as the transfer of technology and financial resources for sustainable development. Such activities might tend to separate basic components of the consensus formula regarding sustainable development by laying greater stress on the environmental component.

34. From the substantive point of view, his delegation supported the emphasis being placed on particular sectoral themes such as consumption and production patterns and toxic waste. His Government was willing to share its experience in introducing environmental costs into production processes in basic sectors of the economy, such as the oil industry. Its unilateral imposition of restrictions on the export of certain petroleum derivatives in spite of their high degree of competitiveness illustrated the multidimensional nature of those themes and the desirability of discussing them in an appropriate intergovernmental context.

35. The goal of sustainable development would be furthered by the liberalization of trade and by action to ensure that trade and environment were mutually supportive. That did not, however, mean that any country could unilaterally impose discriminatory trade restrictions on the pretext of environmental considerations.

36. Ms. ASHIPALA (Namibia) said that as a follow-up to the Rio Conference, her country's Ministry of Environment and Tourism had prepared a 12-point plan,

comprising, inter alia, environmental legislation, a biodiversity information system, environmental education and partnership programmes, aimed at promoting natural resource management. However, unless such efforts were supported, for example through the Global Environment Facility, they would remain unimplemented. The need for financial resources could not be overstated. It was in that context that the Member States of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic had stressed the importance of the implementation of Agenda 21 in the final declaration of a recent meeting held in Brasilia.

37. Her delegation hoped that the proposed review in 1997 of progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would cover, in particular, the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, which had recently been opened for signature. The results of the other conferences, including the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 would also offer interesting material for the review.

38. As a coastal State, Namibia was particularly interested in the conservation of the living resources of the high seas and supported the preparation of an agreement on the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. It was important to note, however, that most developing countries were not in a position to benefit from such resources. In that connection, she stressed the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as an instrument regulating the use of the oceans and their resources in the interest of all nations.

39. Ms. FLORES (Uruguay) reported that her country had taken a number of environmental initiatives, including the establishment of a Ministry of Housing, Regional Development and the Environment; the adoption of a law on environmental impact assessment; the implementation of ecological preservation programmes; and the inclusion of the theme of the environment in national school curricula. In addition, recognizing the importance of establishing an international legal framework to regulate environmental issues, it had become a party to a large number of conventions and instruments, relating to the environment, including, most recently, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

40. With technical assistance, Uruguay would draw up a national inventory of carbon dioxide emissions and, eventually, an inventory of other greenhouse gases not covered by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Uruguay was a founding member of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research and had hosted the high-level meeting at which it had been established. Uruguay also participated in the various meetings of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol. Within its national territory, it monitored stratospheric ozone in the Southern Cone. It was also implementing a country programme for the study of the effects of climate change on the farming and coastal regions of its national territory.

41. Consistent with its strong environmental policy, Uruguay had ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and offered to host the

latter's secretariat. It would recognize the permanent secretariat as a not-for-profit international organization and would accord it all the privileges and immunities generally granted to international organizations.

42. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) reaffirmed his country's continuing support for and commitment to strengthening the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development and welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It noted, however, that the goal of reducing greenhouse gas levels was still remote. His delegation looked forward to considering new inputs at the First Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, while welcome, did not provide for financial mechanisms to assist African and other developing countries.

43. International credibility was essential to achieving sustainable development. Such credibility required a balanced approach to environmental questions - one which did not give preference to any one issue over the others - and adequate levels of official development assistance. The extremely low levels of ODA flows in 1993 (0.29 per cent of the gross national product of the developed countries) certainly did nothing to build confidence.

44. His delegation was concerned by the fact that the major donors lacked the political will to embark on a programme of international cooperation for development which encompassed all commitments undertaken during the Rio Conference. For example, the results of the pilot programme for the sustainable development of the Amazon region, designed with support from the Group of Seven and the World Bank, had been disappointing. The adequacy of funding must be reviewed in the context of the objectives set forth in chapter 33 of Agenda 21. Referring to the transfer of technology, he reiterated the need for the broad dissemination of information about technologies in the public domain. Consideration should also be given to existing conditions in developed countries for the transfer of technology not only in the public domain but also state-of-the-art technology.

45. His delegation supported the principle set forth in the Rio Declaration that an open economic system would be conducive to sustainable development. It believed that unilateral trade measures purportedly taken to protect the environment actually jeopardized the objectives of sustainable development.

46. His delegation attached great importance to the establishment of indicators for the conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests. However, since the value of indicators depended on the reliability of the statistical data on which they were based, and since the availability and reliability of statistical data varied greatly from one country to another and even from one region to another within the same country, studies were necessary in order to identify relevant indicators at the national level with a view to establishing appropriate methods for the compilation and consolidation of comparative data.

47. Mr. KANG'E (Kenya) expressed his delegation's support for the statement delivered by the representative of the Group of 77, adding that the hesitancy of certain developed countries to fulfil their commitments stemmed less from a lack of resources than a lack of political will. His delegation urged all Governments, especially the Governments of the developed countries and the relevant international organizations and agencies, to fulfil their obligations under Agenda 21.

48. Since it attained independence in 1963, Kenya had been a champion of environmental management. Recently, the Government had established a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) with a view to integrating environmental concerns into its national development plans. It had also embarked on a comprehensive review of its environmental legislation, and had strengthened its national environmental institutions with the establishment of the National Biodiversity Unit. The latter's report to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee had highlighted the requirements of in situ and ex situ conservation of biodiversity in Kenya.

49. His country had also ratified a wide variety of instruments concerning conservation, the most recent ones being the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and it was among the 86 countries which had signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

50. His delegation noted that, at its past four sessions, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had emphasized that the strengthening of its regional offices should not end up weakening its headquarters in Nairobi. That concern was also expressed in chapter 38.23 of Agenda 21. The co-location of the secretariats of the environment-related conventions, as recommended in chapter 38.22 (h) of Agenda 21, should take into account the need for the most efficient use of resources.

51. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the modest progress achieved by the Commission on Sustainable Development and hoped to see closer interaction between the Commission and other relevant United Nations organs involved in environmental and development activities.

52. Ms. WALLER-HUNTER (Director, Division for Sustainable Development), replying to the question from the representative of Iran, drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General (A/49/463) and indicated that, in view of the many ongoing intergovernmental processes recommended in Agenda 21, it would seem premature at the current stage to formulate specific proposals on the format, scope and organization of the proposed special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 referred to in General Assembly resolution 41/190. As noted in paragraph 7, the Secretary-General would come up with such proposals at a later stage. The note did not conflict with the decision taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development to engage in substantive preparations for the special session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.